

In the Book of Philippians Paul is writing to tell the Philippian Christians How to Find Joy in Any Circumstance! Now, the incredible thing to remember here is that joy is not what you would be EXPECTING Paul to write about at this time in his life. He is 10-15 years removed from starting the Philippian church, and he is writing to them from inside a Roman prison, where he is on trial for his life for preaching the gospel. Throughout the letter he does 3 things:

1. *Prays for us to have joy.*
2. *Models for us how to find joy.*
- 3 *Tells us what actions we need to take in order to experience joy*

Now, Joy is hard to define: Pages from Internet

Joy: Def: *The internal emotion and condition of the soul of great contentment and well being, which includes emotions and expressions of delight, contentment and gladness of heart.*

- A “byproduct” of life lived rightly, correctly, in relationship
- Internal vs External
- Independent of experiences
- Fruit of the Spirit

“Joy is peace dancing...Peace is Joy at rest!”

How do you find that? Where does joy come from? It’s not like you can go to the store and buy it, nor can you sit yourself down and say...be joyful...and have it take place! We all pursue it in 1000 different ways...and when we cant get it we settle for poor substitutes like

- Pleasure (Physical)
- Happiness (External)
- Possessions (Possessions)

Ultimately, while those things will produce temporary happiness, and passing gratification, they don’t really satisfy the soul. Deep inside we know there is more. Down in our heart we long for something that lasts, something that is significant, something that satisfies.

And that is where Paul begins his letter. In these first 11 verses he says all 3 of the things we are going to see him repeat in many different ways throughout the letter.

Pray for you to have the kind of joy I have

Model for you how to live so you can have it

Tell you the kinds of things you need to do to experience joy!

Look at how he begins the letter, and lets see

3 Ways To Find Joy In Your Life

1. Joy Comes From Sharing A Common Purpose In Life That Is Spiritually Significant! Vs 1-5

- **Every time I remember** (not great memories!) Prison, Flogging, Trial, Sneaking Out of Town! I have joy...not because of the pain...but because of the PARTNERSHIP
- **Partnership:** Lit= Fellowship: A Spiritual Participation with our union with someone
A special bond and/or connection; Active participation with someone
Joint participation in a common activity or interest
- **In the Gospel!:** You are committed to what my life is dedicated to! (Spiritual, Significant)

Rom 1:16-17 pg 796

ILLUS: Food Pantry Email: Mission Trip: Shared Ministry of Some kind!

APPLIC: Missing joy? Byproduct...What are you a part of greater than Self? What Ministry?
CHURCH Every Home AA County!

2. Joy Comes When You Have Confidence About The Out Come Of Your Life. Vs 6-8

Paul is saying, I know it seems like from a human perspective that you will not make it to the end But, Keep this in mind. The final outcome of your life is no more dependant on you than the beginning!

- **Being Confident:** Remaining Steadfast and Sure; I have a settled persuasion
My confidence is not in my strength; not in what I see, not in circumstances around me
I may be chained right now to a Roman Guard...but My confidence in God is not shaken!
- **He who began:** God started the work in your heart
Rom says: While we were still sinners; God drew us to himself!
Our salvation did not begin in our own strength, and it will not end that way!
- **Complete:** He will finish, bring you to exactly the finished product he intends!
Illus: When I travel to Cuba, Mexico, China; Not uncommon at all to see unfinished bldgs
Started, then ran out of resources: Pauls Says, Don't worry, No one is going to heaven
That way! There will be no unfinished people...God never runs out!

Notice what he says: God's Grace is present both in the times we are living in victory, and in defeat!

- If I am in chains, we share God's Grace!
- If I am defending and confirming the gospel (preaching, proclaiming) we share God's grace!

We can be joyful, even in the middle of the most difficult situations of life, because we KNOW God isn't going to leave us unfinished. All of the things that we struggle with, all of the imperfections, all of the weaknesses, will one day be done. We will be changed into what God MADE us to be!

God Abandons Nothing He Begins!

APPLIC: Do you ever get tired, discouraged, worn out, ready to give up? God will finish what He started

3. Joy Comes When You Develop a Character and Life That Honors God. Vs 9-11

Paul says, here is what I am praying for you, this is what I see, I have confidence these things will happen

- **Love will grow larger** (makes you more like God)
- **Knowledge will grow deeper** (God is going to help you know more of him, others, life)
- **Wisdom is going to become sharper!** (Ability to discern and appropriately discriminate)
Depth of insight Discern:
- **Life becomes more Honoring to God**
~**Purity:** (That which is held up to the sunlight and judged pure)
Cloth, Jelly, Honey,
Illus: Held up to the light of God, so that your purity can be seen
~**Productive:** (Spiritual fruit: Leading others to know God, Helping others to grow)
~**Praise God:** With your life (Others see your good works and praise your father)

CONCL: Everyone wants a life of Joy: But not everyone, not even every Christian experiences it

1. **Give yourself to something greater than you are!** Spiritually Significant work with others
That's what being a part of a church, engaged in ministry is all about
Talking about Great Design, there is nothing more satisfying, fulfilling...Produces more joy, than that
2. **Put your confidence in God, that He is going to get you across the finish line spiritually**
Not going to go into heaven half done!
3. **Develop the kind of Character and Life that Honors God!**
Pick a Strong Foundation Class, Join a Small Group, Sing up for a ministry team

We pursue joy as an end in itself, never find it that way, Do these 3 things...Joy will come automatically!

